¶ The ſpectacle of louers.

¶ Here after foloweth a lytell contrauers dyalogue bytwene loue and councell/ with many goodly argumentes of good women and bad/ very compendyous to all eſtates/ newly compyled by Wyllyam Walter ſeruaunt vnto ſyr Henry Warnaye knyght Chaunceloure of the Duchye of Lancaſtre.

Here begynneth the prologue of the auctoure.

HOr as moche as ydelnesse is rote of all vyces
whom to eschue ye wyseman dothe vs counsayle
Therfore entende with some maner of besynesse
Agaynst the same that I myght prevayle
Recorde of Philosepher whiche maketh rehersayle
Better it is to wryte and some thynge for to saye
Than in slouthe & ydelnesse to spende the tyme awaye

And thus thynkynge my mynde for to apply
To make some thynge for my recreacyon
It came to my remembraunce to shewe and notyfy
Bytwene a lover and me the greate altercacyon
Of his peteous complaynt makynge demonstracyon
The answeres agayne there vnto replynge
In maner of argument togyder dysputynge

Wherfore I requyre you with humble petycyon
This my poore werke to take agreable
And there as is amysse to make reformacyon
From mesure & good makynge whiche is so varyable
Lette ygnoraunce excuse my faute reprouable
Whiche made it not for ony presumpcyon
But onely for pastyme and recreacyon

Finis.

On a mornynge for my recreacyon
In to the feldes as I went walkynge
To beholde the grounde I had delectacyon
Arayed w̄ floures fayre and swete smellynge
The trees buddynge and the byrdes syngyng
Phebus his beames shynynge lyke the golde
Made my herte ioye suche pleasures to beholde

And as I was thus walkynge all alone
By an herber I herde ryght sodeynly
A louer that pyteously made his mone
Sayenge alas for sorowe I shall dye
Uenus darte hath wounded me so cruelly
Without I maye my purpose soone attayne
For sorowe my herte wyll breke in twayne

O goddesse of loue that hath the sygnory
Of all creatures attende to my peticyon
Encline my lady that she do apply
To my desyre by thyne instygacyon
That loue in her maye haue suche operacyon
That our two wylles togyder maye be knyt
For as a prysoner to her I me submyt

Alas how greate sorowe it is and payne
To lyue in drede alwaye Imagynynge
How her good grace that I myght attayne
In thought and pensyfnesse alwaye desyrynge
At a good ende my purpose for to brynge
Thus do I lyue betwene hope and drede
Somtyme trustynge/ and somtyme not to spede

¶ Whan her noble person fyrst I dyd beholde
The souenaunce of her beaute my herte so embraced
That my coloure chaunged / my blode waxed colde
Loue there my herte and wyll togyder enterlaced
So fyrmely that neuer it can be defaced
But as her true louer to loue her pardurable
Whiche for no chaunce shall be founde varyable

¶ Alas good lady holde me excused
yf I desyre the / Whiche I am vnworthy
Loue had my herte so greatly abused
Aboue all other to loue you specyally
To my harde fortune I can no wyse reply
But to submyt me vnto your grace and wyll
It is at your pleasure to saue or to spyll

Wherfore good lady
Into your handes
Loue hath me brought
Lose not his lyfe
In thought and care
Alas swete lady
Mercy I aske
With pyte do entende
As a prysonere
Lette loue my care amende
That loueth you so dere
Euer I stande in fere
Remembre my greate payne
Do not my loue dysdayne

¶ By her loue my mynde is sourcyted
That slepynge nor wakynge I am in quyetnesse
But in ymagynacyons & thoughtes greatly turmeted
My coloure is faded / my mynde for heuenesse
Is greatly oppressed / my body for werynesse
And lacke of sustenaunce is so weyke of nature
That without her pyte / it maye not longe endure

¶ Whan that I do her beaute contemplayze
Her noble vertue/her goodly countenaunce
Who that dame nature/hath made so passynge fayze
Than am I suppryzed with her remembzaunce
As a man that were all in a traunce
Enflamed with the hote bzennynge fyze
Of loue/that nothynge may slake my greate delyze

¶ I wolde Jesu she had the pzerogatyfe
That she knewe ỹ thoughtes of al creatures humayne
Than sholde she knowe what a bytter lyfe
I lede foz her/so myght she not refrayne
But foz pyte release me out of payne
And by her loue to confozte me restoze
Foz there is nothynge that I delyze so soze

¶ Alas how am I thus greatly abused
That my mynde to her dare not expzesse
Foz yf she sholde ones haue me refused
Alwaye in sozowe I sholde lyue confoztlesse
Ones must she knowe my cause of heuynesse
Oz of my purpose I shall nothynge attayne
But thus styll my foztune to complayne

¶ O how greate ioye sholde my herte enbzace
Yf that my lady of her sempryne pyte
Wolde me accept in to her specyall grace
That togyder in maryage vnyed we myght be
Than were I brought from care to felycyte
Well myght I saye my loue were not in bayne
Syth her goodly person that I dyd optayne

¶ Often tymes I haue ben purposed
My pyteous sorowe to [illegible] declare
But whan my loue I sholde haue disclosed
Despayre byddeth me for to beware
Lest by disdayne I were brought in care
Desyre my mynde than greatly dothe auaunce
Of my fortune to knowe the fynall chaunce

¶ Thus haue I lyued alwaye languysshynge
In varyaunce betwene loue/hope and drede
With pensyfe thoughtes alwaye ymagynynge
Of my purpose how that I myght spede
And yf I sholde be vnreguardoned
For the loue that I to her do bere
Thus am I alwaye put in thought and fere

¶ O cruell loue O loue insacyable
What haue I offended to be thus troubled
By the cruell dartes of desyre intollerable
Whiche hath my herte so greatly abused
With contynuall care to be thus tourmented
That at no tyme I am in ony rest
But by desyre and fere alwaye oppressed

¶ Cursed be ye my cruell eyes twayne
Whiche haue perfyxed my mynde so desyrous
That my herte in no wyse can refrayne
But of my lady for to be amorous
Ye haue me wounded with paynes dolorous
Of sorowe and care that persed hath my herte
Without her confort my lyfe wyll soone departe

¶ Consultor.

¶ Whan that I herde hym thus pytously complayne
My herte for pyte sorowed inwardly
And for to cause hym his sorowe to refrayne
With wordes of confort I dyd my mynde apply
For in trouble there is no better remedy
Than to a frende for to dysclose his sore
For sorowe close kepte engendreth more and more

¶ Wherfore these wordes to hym dyd I saye
Why do ye thus pytously lament
Confort your selfe yf that ye maye
Or elles ryght soone ye wyll repent
For where as sorowe on sorowe dothe augment
In processe of tyme thynke it as no wonder
But that it wyll perse your herte asonder

¶ Amator.

¶ He loked on me with face pale and wan
His face dyscouered his wofull heuynesse
Alas he sayd I am a wofull man
That by loue am brought in to dystresse
I loue and dare not my loue to her expresse
That hath my herte hooly in her cure
Wer vayle it is that I maye this woo endure

¶ I loue a lady whose beauty dothe excell
Lyke as auroza all other sterres in lyght
Of her noble vertue the trewthe I can not tell
Nature and fortune hath gyuen her that myght
Her noble beaute hath perced so my syght
Enflamynge my herte by desyre contynuall
That vnto loue I am made bonde and thrall.

¶ Consultor.

¶ Suche dysordynat loue/procedeth of ydelnesse
To beholde women/haupnge delectacyon
Whiche by contynuaunce/dothe more & more encrese
Encensynge theyr myndes/by besy Imagynacyon
To fynde the crafte/and operacyon
To brynge poore women/in to suche dotage
In theyr loue/that they myght madde and rage

¶ Some to theyr louers/tokyns do sende
Other delyte them/in goodly apparell
Some other in wrytynge/theyr louers do commende
And by false pmyses procure them to do yll
Other lewde tales/of rybaudry to tell
And to hote meates and drynkes women desyre
By suche prouocacyon/to set theym on a fyre

¶ Thus do they dayly/and study in theyr mynde
How folysshe women/that they myght abuse
And yf by chaunce/ony suche they fynde
Than for a tyme/they wyll theym haunt and vse
And for an other/soone after theym refuse
They do not care/how many they begyle
For suche madde loue lasteth but a whyle

¶ Amator.

¶ What man is he/that wolde hym selfe abstayne
From beholdynge of so noble a creature
Or what is he that wolde not take greate payne
yf that he myght/to purchase suche a treasure
Whiche myght be moost/to his synguler pleasure
God neuer created thynge/vnder the fyrmament
So noble as woman/nor to man more conuenyent

¶ And where as ye saye men haue great delectacyon
To dysdayne women by some subtyll trayne
And to be mutable of theyr dyspolycyon
Trouthe it is/ trewe loue wyll neuer stayne
But to be stedfast/ trewe/ faythfull and playne
Though some entende to women to do shame
All trewe louers of theym are not to blame

¶ Consultor.

¶ Trewe loue/ nay nay/ madde loue men may it call
A foole is he/ he can it not deny
Where he is free to make hym bonde and thrall
In loupnge a woman with herte so stedfastly
Whiche by his loue in no meane can apply
yet from her loue he can hym not refrayne
Though that he knewe his loue spent in vayne

¶ Suche is the condycyon of louers impacyent
That do desyre/ that they may not attrayne
Whiche to theyr degrees is not equyualent
yet by reason they can not theym refrayne
But of theyr possybylyte to complayne
Of the dyfficultye they seke no remedy
Bothe counsell and shame they vtterly deny

¶ Amator.

¶ Why sholde not men loue women in theyr mynde
Syth that brute beestes do loue theyr semblable
All thynge is gouerned by nature and by kynde
And syth that nature in beestes is so stable
Why sholde not a man/ a creature reasonable
Loue a woman syth nature dothe hym bynde
Wolde ye haue men erre agaynst theyr kynde

¶ We louers haue alway ſuche harde chaunce
Some for to loue ferre vnder theyr degre
Or theym ſelfe more greatly do auaunce
We neuer be at our owne lyberte
To haue reſpecte vnto the qualyte
Nature hathe vs in ſuche ſubiectyon
There to loue/where we ought not of reaſon.

¶ Loue her I wyll whyle my lyfe ſhall laſt
What ſo euer therof/here after ſhall enſewe
My herte and wyll ſhall euer be ſtedfaſt
Her onely to loue/as a louer trewe
Reaſon nor counſell/my mynde can not ſubdewe.
No ſhame it is to loue in honeſte
Though that ſhe paſſe ferre aboue my degre.

¶ Conſultor.

¶ What man is ſo madde to loue his ennemy
Whiche dayly putteth hym to ſuche encombraunce
That at no tyme he can reſt quyetly
Nor many tymes take bodyly ſuſtenaunce
But leſeth his colour/ and myſſpendeth his ſubſtaunce
His credence/his vertue and all his good name
For ſuche madde loue/wyſe men wyll hym dyffame.

¶ Suche vyces enſue madde louers comynly
They are ſuſpicyous and theym do deedly hate
That with theyr louers vſe to company
And with theym often fyght/chyde and debate
Moche myſchefe enſueth/they be infortunate
Now in/now out/this is theyr condycyon
Some loſe theyr lyfe/ſome theyr wyt and reaſon.

¶ Amator.

¶ Of a noble herte procedeth gentylnesse
Wolde ye haue me my louer to dyspayre
Though she be parte of my greate heuynesse
I am chefe grounde of my mortall payne
Though I her loue she can me not refrayne
Why sholde I her for my myfortune blame
Syth I my selfe am chefe cause of the same

¶ It was neuer my purpose wyll nor mynde
By suche mysgouernaunce my selfe to abuse
No false suspeccyons in me shall she fynde
For by good cause my loue she myght refuse
Yf that therin I myght me not excuse
Thongh I her loue/yet wyll I not go madde
Nor lose my lyfe/my wyt is not so badde

¶ I meruayle that ye loue so despyse
Whiche of hertely kyndnesse is engendred
Nature a man there vnto dothe entyse
Of myrthe and pleasure it dothe also procede
Frendshyp and charyte there with all agrede
Rancoure and malyce it destroyeth vterly
All thynge by it dothe growe and multyply

¶ Loue dothe quycken euery mannes herte
It prouoketh the mynde to pleasure and lustynesse
Slouthe and sadnesse it causeth to departe
Strength and manhode by it dothe encrese
It hateth penury/it loueth largesse
Loue causeth a man to haue delyte and pleasure
With a woman to do the course of nature

¶ Consultor.

¶ For almoche as ye be taken in the snare
Therfore ye do loue more greatly auaunce
But in loue there is sorowe and care
It consumeth a man by space and contynuaunce
The lenger ye loue the more is your greuaunce
Loue brenneth theym so with her cruell fyre
The more they take the more they do desyre

¶ Theyr laughters ben shorte theyr mournynges are (longe
full lytell ioye but syghes many and greate
In plente of sorowe small pleasure is amonge
Anger and trouble theyr hertes dothe ofte frete
Slepynge nor wakynge they be in quyete
In thought and desyre they brenne feruently
Suche dolefull payne they suffre wylfully

¶ Amator.

¶ Loue is not so as ye haue made reporte
Women to men are mooste profytable
Theyr wordes and beaute dothe men greate confort
Theyr kysses and lokes are moche delectable
To myrthe and ioye they be agreable
Where that woman be / there is greate solace
Happy is he that maye attayne theyr grace

¶ We wylfull louers do lyue pleasauntly
To vs by kynde it is apprpryed
Somtyme to suffer sorowe pacyently
And in ioye agayne to be exalted
A thynge harde wonne shall better be loued
He that wyll not suffre suche lytell payne
Is not worthy suche pleasure to attayne.

¶ Consultor.

¶ O foolysshe louer/ false is thy sentence
To thynke thy payne/ to be to the pleasure
For well thou doest knowe/ by experyence
That loue thy reason hath made dull and obscure
That wyll thou or not/ this payne thou must endure
Loue hath the made/ for to be agast
That wysedome and vertue/ is clerely from the past

¶ Ye louers delyte/ in slouthe and sadnesse
In stede of myrthe/ ye syghe contynually
Despare dothe ofte encrese your heuynesse
Ye be also troubled by Jalousy
By suche meanes/ ye be brought in fransy
In ydell thoughtes/ and slombres of the nyght
Suche is to you/ greate pleasure and delyght

¶ Amator.

¶ To se you contynue in erroure I meruayle
What man is so constaunt/ in his lyuynge
But loue and nature/ shall hym ofte assayle
With womento haue/ theyr bodyly lykynge
In age/ wysedome/ and beaute floryssh ynge
I trowe none can be founde in ony place
But that loue hath/ or shall his herte embrace

¶ To beholde women/ so fayre and swete of vysage
Theyr colour shynynge/ theyr membres well fourmed
Theyr prety countenaunce/ with handes fayre & large
Theyr eyes twynkelynge/ theyr wordes well vttred
Theyr behauour & courtesy of kyndnes dothe procede
What herte is so harde/ that coude hym selfe refrayne
To eschewe theyr company/ or at theym to dysdayne

¶ Consultor.

¶ O cruell youthe/full yll thou arte abused
To suffre so quyetly/thy payne intollerable
The flames of loue/with colde thought encreased
Seynge the pleasure/so shorte and abhomynable
Moche sorowe for small ioye/is not commendable
Pondre thy payne/and pleasure in thy mynde
For small ioye/soone moche sorowe thou shalt fynde

¶ What is beaute/but a floure vanysshynge
The carnall felycyte/the infeccyon of the eye
The dysceyuynge of the mynde of men so coueytynge
A frayle pleasure full of trechery
There as it is taken/it deceyueth kyndly
Beaute and wysedome/seldome dothe agre
It causeth theym vnstable/and inconstant for to be

¶ In youth theyr coloure/is fayre and florysshynge
By age and syckenesse/it is soone faded
Where they were ruddy/they be pale and lourynge
Theyr skynne in all places/swarte and wrynkeled
There is nothynge ought more to be mystrusted
For it blyndeth the eye/with suche voluptuosyte
That from theyr daunger/none escapeth fre

¶ Full harde it is/to fynde a woman stedfast
For yf one eye wepe/the other dothe contrary
Theyr trouth and faythe/but a small whyle dothe last
Theyr pleasure and lust/is harde to satysfye
In wrathe and malyce/they be contynually
Trewthe/shame/ne loue/can not theym refrayne
Theyr synguler pleasure/but that they wyll optayne

¶ What woman is so stedfast/chaste and fure
But for prayer/lust or mede she wyll be greable
That thou of her sholde haue thy wyll and pleasure
Scante one amonge a thousande shall be so stable
yet drede/shame/or wrath that one shall able
Or elles she is suche/the whiche that lacketh beauty
Whome that no man desyreth to company

¶ yf she be a mayden that hath the in fauoure
Wyll not she for small lust lose her virgynyte
yf she be a wyfe/consyder her errour
How by her crafte men deceyued be
yf she be a wydowe/thou mayst playnly se
How soone theyr husbandes deth that they do forget
Wherfore he is not wyse/that in theym trust doth set

¶ yf she be an harlot/she maketh no questyon
Of thy maner/wysdome/beaute or alyaunce
But for her rewarde fyrst she maketh mocyon
Or that thou of her shall haue ony dalyaunce
Thus dothe she loue the/onely for thy substaunce
As longe as ye haue/so longe theyr loue dothe last
Where pouerty is/all loue is clerely past

¶ Loue is conuenyent/to a man of sadde discrecyon
For madde louers set I tell by theyr frendes
Theyr hertes be so take by loues prouocacyon
To deme and syghe/and beholde theyr semelynes
To the prayse of theyr louers al thynges they do dyspyse
They haue eyen and se not/and wyt without reason
Thus be they brought to shame and confusyon

Amator.

Cyf fortune be to vs/ fortyme contrary
And that loue hathe put vs/ to anoyaunce
Fortune wyll tourne/ and loue wyll applye
To theym that seke it/ in space and contynuaunce
Loue healeth quyckely/ all sorowe and greuaunce
All thynge is pleasure/ that we louers coust
Loue causeth vs/ our sorowe to forget

CAgaynst age/ none can make allyssence
yf beaute fayle/ sholde loue be mynysshed
Kyndnesse and loue/ wolde theym recompence
For that they haue had/ for to be cherysshed
Loue seldome decayeth/ but sooner is encreased
The bonde of wedlocke/ theym also dothe combynde
Unto theyr dethe/ to be stedfast and kynde

CMannes reason to nature dothe apply
For no man can haue greater delectacyon
Than with women to conuerse and company
And with theym to haue carnall copulacyon
To sowe theyr swete sede of generacyon
What better pleasure mays a man couet
Than chyldren of his owne sede to beget

CGod created woman for mannes pleasure
Without theym the worlde coude not multyply
Arystotell saythe/ it is the greatest pleasure
Unto a man/ the thynge moost necessary
To haue a wyfe/ of excellent beauty
Curteys/ gracyous/ stedfast/ wyfe/ and sad
Were not a man happy/ that suche a louer had

¶ Suche there be/and many in the nombre
yf some be lyght/and vnstable of condycyon
ye ought not/on all other for to wondre
Lette euery for theym selfe/make declaracyon
And as they haue deserued/so regarde the person
Full many in trouble/stedfast proued be
Suffryng for theyr husbandes/bothe payne & pouerte

¶ Lyke as the doughter/wyll morne and bewayle
Without of the mother/she be conforted
In lykewyse loue/can no tyme preuayle
Without of gladnesse/it be nourysshed
There is no louer/but that he is auaunced
Somtyme in myrthe/to haue delyte and pleasure
Or elles theyr sorowe/they myght no whyle endure

¶ What causeth a man/to loue sooner apply
Than a quycke wyt/gentylnesse and goodlyuynge
Unto a wyse man/it is mooste necessary
That can kepe counseyll/and is sadde of gouernynge
Theyr ryght and honeste/alwaye dyffendynge
Unkyndnesse and shames/they vtterly defye
Wherfore in true loue/all noblenesse dothe lye

¶ Consultor.

¶ For asmoche as these wordes can not refrayne your
Take ensample by theym/ þ haue ben deceyued (herte
And in thy mynde/prudently aduerte
Fyrst of kynge Dauyd be it remembred
For all his holynesse/auoutry he commytted
With one Barsabe/wyfe vnto Urye
And after for her sake/caused hym to dye

Specta. ofio. C.i.

¶ Kynge Salomon ẏ all men in wysedome dyd excell
By women was enclyned vnto ydolatry
The wyfe of kynge Acab/called Jesabell.
The prophetes of god caused for do dye
Prognes her sone/rosted full truely
And gaue hym to Tereo/her husbande to eate
Bycause her syster Phylomine/with chylde he begete

¶ Sampson the stronge/was also betrayed
By dalida his leminan/in whome he had confydence
Vyrgyll by a woman/in a basket was hanged
A woman rode on aristotell/w̄ shame and vyolence
Thus were they vaynquysshed/for all theyr scyence
Medea/slewe her chylde/lyke a cruell mother
And gaue Jason one parte/and toke her selfe the other

¶ The Cytees of troy/and also of Thebe
By womans trespas/was brought to destruccyon
The wyfe of kynge Mynos/called Pasyphe
Made a Cowe of wood/lyke in proporcyon
Couered with a skynne/by whiche decepcyon
To fulfyll her lust/with a Bull she medled
Of whome Mynotawre/the monster she conceyued

¶ Of many other/I coude reherse the lyuynge
But for my purpose/these do nowe suffyse
What auayled theyr holynes/wysedome & cunnynge
Or strength/sythe women can theym so entyse
To do that thynge/that men sholde theym despyse
Is not he madde/seynge the experyence
That wyll haue in theym/trust or confydence.

I meruayle that ye coude speke or thynke the same
For the trespace of fewe/on all other for to rayle
Pretendyng by your wordes theym vtterly to dyffame
Howbe it your saynge/shall nothynge preuayle
For of as many good women I shall make rehersayle
The merytes of whome/are almoche to be praysed
As the vyces of the other/sholde be dyscommended

Mynerua of Athenes/was called the goddes
Of her wysedome/for her cunnynge and polycy
Carmenta of latyn/founde fyrst the letters
Nycostrates also/the letters of Italy
What saye you to the sybylles/w theyr greate prophecy
Aregenes founde also/fyrst the crafte of weuynge
Thus dyd they excell men/by theyr wyt & cunnynge

What man can gyue theym prayslynge conuenyent
Whiche studyed so besyly/to get fruytfull scyence
To prouoke mannes herte/to study to be dylygent
Who can expresse/the wyfely pacyence
Of Grysell/or of Penolype the prudence
The stedfastnes of Lucres/agaynst her wyl rauysshed
Whiche slewe her selfe/after the dede publysshed

Who wyll not prayse the faythfull and true Orestyll
Whiche whan she sawe Mercus prolancus to shyp goo
That was her husoande/agaynst her mynde and wyll
For his loue fell downe there deed for woo
Elyssa/after the dethe of her husbande Dydo
For sorow ranne/vnto the funerall fyre
Her body with her lordes/to brenne was her desyre

¶ Of Arthemesya/Porcya/and also Tysbe
Judyth/Julya/Valerya/and Hester
Reed the hystoryes/there shall ye playnly se
Fromfedfast loue/they neuer dyd dysseuer
For length of tyme/theyr storyes I dysser
And for theyr vertues/I afferme certaynly
That men ought theym to prayse and magnyfy

¶ Consultor.

Yf men consydered/the trouble and the payne
That they sholde suffre whan they be maryed
I thynke they wolde theym selfe soone refrayne
In eschewynge the dannger/that after sholde procede
For an heuy lyfe/many of theym do lede
Whiche for to treate of/in euery circumstaunce
It wolde aske/a longe contynuaunce

¶ Some of theym do wake/whan ỹ they sholde slepe
Some for theyr lyuynges/labour contynually
Other auenture theym/in to perylles depe
Where they lese lyfe/and substaunce sodeynly
Thus do they lyue in drede and ieoperdy
Some stele or borowe/to bere theyr importune charge
Some hanged/some in pryson and dare not go at large

¶ Some to brynge vp theyr chyldren/are ententyfe
And greatly troubled/for theyr vnwardnesse
Some with theyr wyues/contynue an heuy lyfe
As in chydynge/fyghtynge/and other frowardnesse
Some by Jalousy/are put in heuynesse
In care/trouble/sorowe/and seldome in tranquyllyte
Suche is theyr lyfe/neuer at no certeynte

¶ For yf she be fayre/ she shall haue great resort
And for her beaute she shall be moche desyred
Fewe men wyll haue pleasure or confort
To take a wyfe whiche that is dysformed
A fayre wyfe to kepe a man dothe stande in great drede
A foule wyfe to hym is but lytell pleasure
Thus is theyr mynde neyther stable nor sure

¶ Amator.

¶ Holde your peace/ your wordes are frustrate
To alledge in maryage suche importunyte
For many men are so fortunate
That neuer were maryed/ nor neuer shall be
No man can contynue alway in felycyte
For man is predestynate by fortunes operacyon
To lyue in this worlde in trouble and vexacyon

¶ Yf men sholde folowe theyr naturall dysposycyon,
Bytwene beestes and theym there were no dyfference.
Wherfore for to haue natures operacyon
By wedlocke it is suffred to be without offence
Other wyse to do/ is shame and inconuenyence
Bothe goddes lawe & mannes/ he offendeth greuously
Wherfore no man can say/ but wedlocke is necessary

¶ Better than chaste loue/ what thynge is to be loued
Whiche is grounded in holynes and also in honeste
Frendshyp and affynyte is therby encreased
In one body togyder ioyned be
Chyldren borne in wedlocke be lawfull and fre
They be combyned with bonde so charytable
That nothynge but dethe can make theym separable.

¶.iij.

¶ Loue must be fyrst/or they be maryed
For by the bonde of loue maryage is consecrate
There ought nothynge/more to be commended
Than loue that with charyte/and peace is confyderate
For there as is loue/there seldome is debate
And yf amonge louers/happen ony varyaunce
Seldome it is sene of ony longe contynuaunce

¶ It is longe of theyr husbandes/yf they do not well
Wherfore ye do now/accuse theym wrongfully
To folowe theyr myndes/men maye theym compell
But women can not to theyrs apply
What cause hath a man to be than in ialousy
For yf ony trouble be/angre or varyaunce
Women bere the brunt/and suffre the penaunce

¶ What pleasure it is for a man to take a foule wyfe
Without her vertue be the more acceptable
Full often he shall be wery of his lyfe
A fayre wyfe to hym/shall be more agreable
As good and as kynde/and as moche profytable
Foly it is/to haue theym mystrusted
For yll they maye be/yf they be so dysposed

¶ Consultor.

¶ Whan brome bere apples/or homlockes hony
Than trust the wordes of women/and stedfastnes
That nature hathe gyuen theym/no man can deny
It is theyr proprytees/to be full of dysceytfulnes
To wepe and spynne/and hyde no secretnes
To lye and flatter/suche condycyous they haue
Fewe other good proprytees/god vnto theym gaue

¶ Beware of women/for they be fraudulent
Theyr wordes are venym/mengled with hony
Thou knowest her sayenge/ȳ knowest not her entent
A foole is he/that in theym dothe affye
Tell theym thy councell/and they wyll it dyscrye
Imparfyte/dysceytfull/and full of mutabylyte
Suche is theyr kynde/nature and properte.

¶ Women can loke on men/with face double
For in theyr hertes/they be full varyable
Theyr fayned loue/hath put many men to trouble
Whiche haue supposed theym/to be ferme and stable
By blandysshynge wordes/theyr bayte detestable
Lyke the Scorpyon/that sheweth the face smylynge
And with the tayle/sodeynly dothe stynge.

¶ Amator.

¶ Fye fye for shame/ye do rayle in your sentence
Theym so to dyspraysse/it is not commendable
Syth they be bounde/by vertue of obedyence
To obey theyr husbandes/ȝ to theym to be seruysable
Not as a seruaunt/but by loue charytable
And as a frende/to be to theym stedfast
In worde and dede/whyle that theyr lyues last.

¶ Why do ye despyse women/so shamefully
Syth that in these offence/that men be more infecte
What is he that Justly can deny
In none of theym/that he maye be detect
Some women in wysedome/haue better circumspect
Than some haue/with wysedome and prouydence
To eschewe suche shame/and inconuenyence.

¶ To haue a frende/it is a synguler pleasure
Who can haue a better/than his wedded wyfe
For she can do to hym no dyspleasure
Syth she is partener/of all his sorowe and stryfe
With hym she must contynewe all her lyfe
And to her power to helpe theym at theyr nede
For of theyr husbandes they stande in fere and drede

¶ Women be full of pyte and compassyon
Theyr merytes can not be to moche praysed
Loue is in theym/by nature and complexcyon
Of hertly kyndnes/to men so perfyxed
In welthe and wo it is not mynysshed
All payne and trouble/they take agreable
That myght for vs be good and profytable

¶ Consultor.

¶ Now adayes olde women/and yonge go straungely
Lyke comen women/theyr apparell is dysguysed
To prouoke yonge hertes/theyr desyres to apply
Theyr heer dysplayed/theyr faces paynted
Theyr gownes lowe collered / theyr brestes enhaunced
Suche ven ym they profer/though it be not acceptable
yet is theyr entent/approued dampnable

¶ Thus fewe of theym/do regarde theyr honeste
And folowe theyr pleasure/and sensuall delectacyon
For at feestes and esbatementes there wyll they be
Where yonge people resorte/for theyr recreacyon
Whiche are dysposed/by naturall inclynacyon
To talke and dally/and besyly to procure
To ꝓuoke theym to apply to theyr disordynat pleasure

¶ All thynge that youth and courage can delyte
At suche feestes as is prepared compnly
Theyr myndes to solace and pleasure to recyte
As good metes & drynkes/mery talkynge & mynstrally
Dauncynge and syngynge/and testes of rybaudry
Whiche bryngeth women to suche perplexyte
That they forget bothe shame and honeste

¶ O what grete myscheefe ensued and aduersyte
For that quene Helyn by coloured deuocyon
Went to Uenus temple there Parys was for to se
And the other troyans makynge theyr oblacyon
To se the experyence she had delectacyon
yf his beauty were as it was reported
Where by her argument after she was rauysshed

Under suche colour they vsed theyr hastes dampnable
To be newe fangled it is theyr properte
And blasyngly to shewe theyr beauty delectable
And to be prompte in spekynge suche is theyr felycyte
By suche meanes they bycke theyr wedlocke & chastyte
For the shyp sholde neuer by tempest spyll
yf in the hauen it contynued styll

¶ Whan ye haue a wyfe kepe her from lyberte,
On her do not dote nor be not to tendre
For by suche meanes she wyll haue suche felycyte
That of the she wyll not stande in ony fere
To moche familyarcyte/dysdayne dothe engendre
Without drede be/loue they soone forget
Loue and drede togyder yll purpose dothe let

¶ Amator

¶ Why sholde not women vnto feestes resorte
One frende with another I thynke ordynate
To passe the tyme with honest game and sporte
For to be solytary / the mynde is fatygate
To be in company / the mynde is recreate
yll thoughtes and humours / engendreth of ydlenes
It shorteth the lyfe with slouth and heuynes

¶ To were suche apparell / it is the guyse comynly
From the comen vsage they may theym not refrayne
Theyr husbandes pleasures for to satysfy
To were newe facyons they must be glad and fayne
Or as an abiecte they wyll at them dysdayne
And as vnworldly they shall be ells reprobate
Not regardynge theyr honeste and estate

¶ To go on pylgrymage it is merytoryous
For god wolde be worshypped in many a sondry place
Bothe to body and soule it is commodyous
For by it the soule purchaseth pardon and grace
It febleth the body by contynuaunce and space
Theyr hertes to more deuocyon doth enclyne
Wherfore at theyr doynge men ought not to repyne

¶ To kepe theyr Wedlocke they haue great dylygence
yf they breke Wedlocke they lyue in worldely shame
To god they make an heuy offence
Theyr husbandes honesty they vtterly dyffame
Wronge heyres enheryte by theyr importune blame
With penaunce they may theyr synnes puryfy
But the trespas and sclaundre they can neuer remedy

¶ Full lytell a man regarded his honeste
yf he kepe his wyfe in suche subiectyon
That seldome she sholde haue ony lyberte
With her frendes to haue recreacyon
To kepe theym to streyte it is a prouocacyon
To cause a good woman her husbande for to hate
For yf she be yll nothynge can her abate

¶ Conslusor.

¶ Women be lykened to the Chymer of Thessayle
Hauynge the symylytude or heed of a lyon
The body of a Gote the last parte or tayle
Unto a Chure a venymous Dragon
To this monstre by theyr dyspolycyon
They be lykened by the poetes faynynge
For .iij. pryncypall vyces in them moost reygnynge

¶ Fyrst they do loke with a lyons countenaunce
To haue preemynence they desyre vtterly
And that men sholde theym in euery place auaunce
And to theym do seruyce pleasure or curtesy
They frete in theyr hertes for dysdayne and enuy
yf they se ony better than they be apparelled
Or better taken or more to be commended

¶ The seconde to a Gote for synne & vycyousnesse
They be lykened and to the see swalowynge
A man shall neuer fynde theym out of redynesse
How moche he wyll do he shall haue no denyenge
But alwaye more and more they be coueytynge
And for as moche as one cannot suffise theyr appetyte
To haue helpe of many some of theym delyte

¶ The.iiij. they be lykened to a dragon venymous
For theyr bely tongues, that alwaye talke and clatter
yf they be displeased than be they so fumous
That they care not what they say or who they sclaūder
Moche grudge and quarelynge myschefe and daunger
Ensueth by theyr tongues serpentyne
Whiche are so double that they can byte and whyne

¶ Amator.

¶ To displayse women it can not you preuayle
Theyr good names by you can not be empayred
It becommeth no man on theym so to rayle
Though some haue done amysse all haue not offended
For one womans trespas sholde all be discommended
No man wyl repute your sayenge reasonable
To allege on theym suche vyces detestable

¶ Men gyue them preemynence by custome curtesye
Though that women wolde they can it not refrayne
Theyr dutyes they must vse and occupye
Not by no pryde suche custome they do vse
They are not so ignorant theym selfe so to abuse
Nor to disdayne ony that theym dothe excell
In beaute substaunce or good apparell

¶ The philosopher sayth it is expedyent
The gentyll to be of greater strength and vertue
The pacyens in nature more feble and impotent
For yf they were equall than mygbt they not subdue
The one the other nor no fruyte sholde ensue
Wherfore the coldest man is of more hotter kynde
Than the hotest woman is that ony mancan fynde

¶ Why sholde not women/ of theyr tongues be ryfe
To plede theyr causes/theyr trewthe to veryfy
They haue none other armoure dyffensyfe
Theyr power is to feble/theyr wronges to iustyfy
To speke nor to do/none can lyue so pacyently
Though that they chyde/theyr angre is soone past
Theyr wordes of wynde/is lyckened to a blast

¶ Ten monethes/women with theyr chyldren go
And of theyr bodyes/that tyme be they nourysshed
With panges and stytches/they suffer payne and wo
In peryll of dethe/whan they be delyuered
With theyr mylke after/a season they be fed
Moche payne and trouble/our mothers for vs take
Wherfore all women/we ought to loue for theyr sake

¶ To make of women men sholde be gladde and fayne
Syth they to vs/be so tendre with dylygence
One man for an other/wolde not take the payne
Theyr kyndnesse we can not duely recompence
To loue theym we haue good cause/by experyence
They are so moche our frendes in sycknesse & in helthe
He that theym hateth/loueth not his welthe

¶ Consultor.

¶ We wyll no lenger/in these maters debate
Folowe my counsell/his company eschewe
yf ye entende your sorowe to mytygate
In secrete places/do not ye contynue
Imagynacyons & thoughtes/your mynde wyl subdue
Wherfore suche hauntes/yf ye do not cease
Loue wyll in you/more and more encrease

¶ Experyence by fyre/whyche is nygh quenched
With brymstone it wyll be kyndled soone agayne
In lykewyse loue/yf it be frequented
Wherfore from her loue/do your selfe refrayne
Fynde some occasyon/at her to dysdayne
To defyre her loue/be not ye to madde
Except of yours/that she wolde be as gladde

¶ Amator.

¶ To gyue me suche counsell/me thynke ye be not wyse
Your sugred lyppes can not me begyle
For yf I sholde folowe your aduyse
My lyfe wolde contynue/but a small whyle
From her company/I can not me exyle
To leue that thynge/whyche that I loue best
No reasonable man/wyll make no suche request

¶ Wherfore of this talkynge/now lette vs cease
Exsamples I haue/ryght many and excellent
Theyr wysedome and noblenesse/for to encrease
But at this tyme/these shall be competent
Wherfore from henceforthe/leue your false argument
And of women speke not so reprouable
For shame it is to you/and nothynge commendable

¶ Consultor.

¶ Thus dyd we fynysshe/our communycacyon
Desyrynge the assystence to take this agreable
And in that is amysse/to make reformacyon
And also all women/I humbly theym supply
At this poore treatyse/for to haue none enuye
I haue nothynge sayd/that is to theyr dyspraysse
But I haue made answer/theyr honour more to rayse

¶ But for almoche as some men haue delectacyon
To rayle vpon women and theym to dyscommende
I therfore entende to make demonstracyon
Of theyr oppробryous wordes / wherin they do offende
By reasonable answeres to enduce theym to amende
Wherby they may haue perfytly knowlege
That women be not gylte in that they do allege

¶ Wherfore I requyre you consyder myne entent
Whiche made it not for malyce or ony dyspytefulnesse
For yf I sholde so do / I were ryght necligent
And worthy to be rebuked of shame and vngentylnesse
Bothe prayse and dysprayse herin I do expresse
yf I deserue blame in speakynge so largely
I trust to haue thanke for replyenge the contrary

¶ Lenuoy of Robert Copland.

ENdeuer thy selfe thou lytell boke I pray
To thyne auctoure and vnto eche degre
Excusynge thyne imprescyon al way
yf to theyr mynde it fortune not to be
And where mysse is / that they wyll pardon me
And to correct after theyr good entent
With lesse or more as it is conuenyent.

¶ Finis.

¶ Imprynted at London in Fletestrete at the sygne
of the Sonne by me Wynkyn de Worde.

WYNKYN
DE
WORDE